

*Amendments Will Get Up-or-Down Votes Friday*  
July 30, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) offered an amendment to lift the current moratorium on deepwater drilling the Gulf of Mexico. He also offered an amendment to dedicate up to \$1.2 billion in oil spill penalties from BP to Gulf coastal restoration projects. Both amendments will get an up-or-down vote Friday in the House of Representatives as part of debate on the CLEAR Act, legislation responding to the BP oil disaster.

**“Louisiana’s workers, small business owners, and communities have suffered enough due to the BP oil disaster, and they have said loud and clear that the moratorium is causing even more harm,”** said Congressman Melancon. **“My amendment will lift the moratorium in a responsible way that allows our workers to continue producing energy for the nation, while still holding companies accountable for higher safety standards so we never again experience a disaster like Deepwater. This amendment is good for workers, good for business, and good for Louisiana, and I encourage my colleagues to support it and end this moratorium.**

**“I am also offering an amendment to dedicate up to \$1.2 billion in penalties from BP to coastal restoration projects. The damage BP’s negligence is causing to America’s wetlands will take decades for us to fully recover from. My amendment will hold BP accountable by law for repairing the destruction, and provide Gulf states with up to \$1.2 billion dollars upfront to jumpstart saving our coast.”**

### **Moratorium Amendment**

Congressman Melancon has been pressing the federal government since May to [end the moratorium](#)

on deep-water drilling and clarify new regulations for [shallow-water drilling](#)

that have created a “de facto” moratorium in the Gulf. The offshore energy industry is a major economic engine for south Louisiana, providing thousands of jobs and supporting numerous locally-based service companies in Congressman Melancon’s Congressional district.

The Melancon amendment would lift the deepwater moratorium on offshore drilling for companies that meet the new safety requirements issued by the Department of the Interior in the wake of the explosion. Specifically, if an application for a permit to drill complies with the “Notice to Lessees” 5 and 6, complies with any further safety measures recommended by the Secretary, and has completed all required safety inspections, the moratorium will not apply to the drilling application.

The Melancon amendment will also work to prevent another disaster from occurring and ensure companies are better able to respond to oil spills. The Secretary of the Interior will be required to report by October 31st to the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on the status of:

- (1) the collection and analysis of evidence regarding the potential causes of the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling rig, including information collected by the Presidential Commission and other investigations,
- (2) implementation of safety reforms announced by the Department of the Interior on May 27th,
- (3) the ability of operators in the Gulf of Mexico to respond effectively to an oil spill in light of the Deepwater Horizon incident; and
- (4) industry and government efforts to engineer, design, construct and assemble wild well intervention and blowout containment resources necessary to contain an uncontrolled release of hydrocarbons in deep water, should another blowout occur.

### **Up to \$1.2 Billion for Coastal Restoration**

The coastal restoration amendment would create a new civil penalty for any oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico of more than 1 million barrels, including the BP disaster. The penalty would be \$200 million per 1 million barrels spilled. Recent estimates indicate that up to 5.2 million barrels have leaked into the Gulf as a result of the BP disaster, which would result in a penalty of up to \$1.2 billion dedicated to coastal restoration along the Gulf.

The Melancon amendment would direct the penalty to a new Gulf of Mexico Restoration Account to fund coastal restoration projects. The fund would be overseen by the Gulf Coast Restoration Council, a task force composed of federal, state, and local representatives. Civil penalties for oil spills are established by the federal Water Pollution Control Act (also known as the "Clean Water Act"), which the federal government must sue to collect.

Congressman Melancon represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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